

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

CENTRAL NEW JERSEY RECOGNIZES AND CELEBRATES HENRIETTA BACKER FOR HER SERVICE TO THE PRINCETON COMMUNITY

HON. RUSH D. HOLT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 23, 2004

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank Henrietta Backer, known as Heny to friends and neighbors, for her service to the Princeton community.

More than 20 years ago, Heny Backer came to Princeton to visit her daughter at the university. The town was fortunate that day: she was so impressed that she and her husband, Bernie, decided to relocate there. Heny has since made an indelible mark on the Princeton community. Highly principled, she is an inspiration to those around her and has earned our heartfelt appreciation.

Heny Backer has served in many capacities on a number of community organizations, and in each case she has done so with fairness and a civic-minded spirit.

Her unending energy marked her tenure as a commissioner of the Housing Authority for the Borough of Princeton, where she sought to make affordable housing available to all who seek it.

Heny's commitment to finding fair, decent, peaceful solutions to the world's problems has made her one of the indispensable volunteers for the Coalition of Peace Action. Her leadership resulted in the borough's formal expression of disappointment in our country's decision to take preemptive action against Iraq.

Through her efforts, the Princeton Community Democratic Organization (PCDO) was reinvigorated. Under her leadership, the political dialogue of the community was elevated in substance and integrity. Due to her tireless dedication to addressing the many challenges our community faces in a fair and respectful manner, she was elected to serve as both the president of the PCDO and chair of the Princeton Municipal Democratic Committee. She continues to serve on both organizations today.

Heny Backer has contributed significantly to the life of her community and to the positive nature of its political dialogue. For me, Heny has been a source of good advice and good ideas for which I am ever grateful. She has earned our heartfelt appreciation for her efforts. I ask my colleagues to join me in giving her this recognition.

CONGRATULATING THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL BUILDING INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION ON ITS 50TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. STENY H. HOYER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 23, 2004

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, this year marks the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Maryland-National Capital Building Industry Association. Throughout its existence, the Association has worked to make the dream of independent homeownership for residents of Maryland and Washington, DC a reality.

Under the leadership of building industry pioneer Carl M. Freeman, the MNCBIA received its charter from the National Association of Homebuilders in 1954. And since its inception, the organization has remained true to its mission statement, which reads: "The Maryland-National Capital Building Industry Association (MNCBIA) is dedicated to organizing, influencing and improving economic growth and legislative, regulatory, social and educational opportunities for all segments of the building industry and the community it serves."

The MNCBIA is truly demonstrative of the diversity of its trade: The Association is comprised of more than 730 companies representing the interests of more than 18,000 employees of the residential development and building industries. Throughout its existence, the MNCBIA has worked to create an entrepreneurial environment in our area that encourages innovation and competition.

The Association should be strongly commended for its role in the regional economy. In addition to representing the homebuilding industry in local communities, Members are engaged in single and multifamily building, land development, remodeling, rehab and renovation and general light construction. Associate members are companies and individuals who provide materials, products, financing and many other services, including subcontracting, to builders and developers.

Mr. Speaker, because of the hard work of its members, the MNCBIA has contributed to a vibrant building sector in our metropolitan area, and boosted demand for goods and services from the building products industries and other sectors such as construction; consulting engineering, architecture and real estate law.

Successful relationships between the homebuilding industry and residents of Maryland and Washington, DC, are essential for smart growth and mutual satisfaction with the development process. The MNCBIA strives to foster open communication and understanding between these two groups.

The Association has also taken great care to protect the integrity and craftsmanship of the region's home and building designs by establishing the Annual Custom Builder Awards of Excellence, which recognizes local custom

builders and remodelers for excellence in construction, architecture, and design.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank the Maryland-National Capital Building Industry Association for its numerous contributions to communities in Maryland and Washington, DC during the past 50 years. Housing means more than just a roof over your head: It signifies that you can provide for your family independently. I look forward to working with the Association in the future in its efforts to build safe, affordable homes for the citizens of Maryland and Washington, DC—so that those families can claim their part of the American dream.

HONORING RUBEN BURKS

HON. DALE E. KILDEE

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 23, 2004

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise before you today on behalf of my hometown of Flint, MI, to honor a great man, Mr. Ruben Burks for his indefatigable service as past UAW Region 1C Secretary-Treasurer. On Thursday, February 19, 2004 the community will honor Mr. Ruben Burks during a special dinner to be held at the Mott Community College Prah Center ballroom, also located in my hometown of Flint, MI.

Ruben Burks was born August 23, 1933 in Louisiana. He relocated to Flint, MI in 1955, and gained employment with General Motors Corporation (GM) Fisher Body Plant 2 as an assembler. He also became a member of the UAW Local 598, during that same year. As a member of Local 598, Ruben held several leadership positions, such as shop committeeperson, alternate committeeperson, and executive board member. In 1970, former UAW President Walter Reuther appointed Ruben to the International Union staff in Region 1C. Region 1C serves UAW members of GM, independents, parts and supplier plants in 11 counties in south-central Michigan. In 1983 Ruben became the Assistance Director of Region 1C and remained in that position until 1989 when he was elected to the office of Regional Director, where he served a total of three terms. On June 24, 1998, Ruben was elected to the Union's second-highest office, Secretary-Treasurer of the UAW. Ruben maintained this position until retirement in 2002. During his tenure, Ruben was a strong leader in promoting economic development, he worked diligently to attract and keep good jobs in the Flint community. He was instrumental in the UAW-GM community health care initiative in Flint, which helped to improve the quality and accessibility of health care while at the same time making the health delivery system more cost efficient. Ruben has advocated over the years for the working family to ensure that their voices were heard among politicians and business leaders.

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

Ruben Burks is currently actively involved in a host of civic, charitable, and youth organizations within his community. In 1997 Mott Community College awarded Ruben with an honorary degree in Community Development in recognition and appreciation for his contributions to the Flint Community. Aside from being an outstanding leader and role model, Ruben Burks is also the devoted father of 7 children and grandfather of 10 grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, this community, indeed this world, is better because of Ruben Burks. Ruben Burks has been a positive influence on me. I am a better Congressman, a better person because of the example and influence of Ruben Burks.

Mr. Speaker, as a Member of Congress, I ask my colleagues in the 108th Congress to please join me in honoring my constituent and dear friend Ruben Burks for his outstanding contributions to the Flint community and the State of Michigan.

HONORING TERESA FONTENETTE

HON. ROBERT T. MATSUI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 23, 2004

Mr. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor a woman with a long and fruitful career in California state government. Teresa Fontenette is set to retire from a remarkable career that has spanned five decades. As her friends, family, and colleagues gather to celebrate Teresa's, affectionately known as Terri to those who know and love her, illustrious career, I ask all of my colleagues to join me in saluting this outstanding citizen of Sacramento.

After completing high school with the inaugural graduating class of St. Francis School for Girls in Sacramento, Terri made her first foray into California state government by serving as a Junior Clerk Typist with the California State Personnel Board. Shortly thereafter, Terri became the Junior Stenographer with the Department of Motor Vehicles and General Services. In 1967, Terri was promoted to Stenographer II at the Department of Health Services.

In 1971, Terri joined the Department of Finance. Through hard work and dedication, Terri became the Secretary to the Personnel Office. During her tenure with the Department of Finance, Terri enjoyed great access to some of the most influential policy makers in California. Terri still fondly recalls sharing her peanuts and candy with several Governors of California during her time in the State Capitol.

Terri's desire to maximize her considerable talents led her to quit state service and enroll at Sacramento City College. Terri's leadership qualities were evident to those as Sacramento City College as she became the President Of the Black Student Union. Terri would eventually receive the prestigious President's Scholarship to attend California State University, Sacramento.

Terri would rejoin the Department of Finance part-time Student Assistant. After graduating with a degree in Social Work/Psychology in 1979, Terri was promoted Administrative Assistant II in 1981.

In the next four years, Terri's outstanding work continued to earn her a number of pro-

motions; as Terri went from being an Associate Governmental Program Analyst to the Assistant Public Information Officer for the Governor's Exempt Program.

In 1985, Terri was asked to be part of the start-up team for the California Lottery. Terri would begin her service to California State Lottery as the Staff Services Manager I and Minority Affairs/Contract Compliance Manager. In the next eighteen years, Terri would serve with great distinction as a valued member of the Senior Staff. Terri offered her considerable knowledge to the Marketing Division as she was the primary liaison to the advertising agency developing African-American consumer marketing strategies.

Terri's outstanding professional accomplishments have rightfully earned her a number of awards in recognition of her excellence. Terri was named the Corporate Individual of the Year by Black Business Listings & Black Expo in 1996. The year after, Terri was appointed to the Corporate Advisory Council by the Asian Business Association. In 2000, Terri was acknowledged by the California Department of General Services for her contributions in furthering small business and disabled veteran business participation in state contracting.

Mr. Speaker, as Terri's friends, family, and colleagues gather to celebrate her great career; I am honored to pay tribute to a dedicated and successful public servant. Terri's career is a true testament to the value of public service. Although her career with the California state government may be over, her commitment to make a positive impact in the community, fortunate for us, is far from over. I ask all of my colleagues to join with me in wishing Terri Fontenette continued success in all her future endeavors.

RECOGNIZING CRYSTAL DOMENECH

HON. NYDIA M. VELÁZQUEZ

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 23, 2004

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives to recognize the achievements of Crystal Domenech, who was raised in Sunset Park, Brooklyn, in my Congressional District.

At 19, Crystal has done what many people only dream to achieve in a lifetime. Since the age of 13, she has been an active member of the United Puerto Rican Organization of Sunset Park (UPROSE)—the oldest Puerto Rican community-based organization in Brooklyn.

Since Sunset Park is a working class, immigrant waterfront neighborhood and the site of many industrial uses, UPROSE's mission of youth and community empowerment seeks to make Sunset Park a better, safer place to live for local residents.

It is young people like Crystal who are truly changing the direction of our communities. She is one of the founding members of UPROSE's Environmental Enforcers, a youth group that has taken on many issues relating to environmental justice.

Crystal's list of accomplishments is long. She has worked tirelessly with me and other elected officials in educating the public on the unfair siting of power plants and other polluting facilities in low-income communities.

Currently, she is working with UPROSE on its Urban Forestry Project and on a community design plan for a public open space greenway along the Sunset Park waterfront. She has caught the attention of politicians, community leaders and the media alike.

Given her energy and commitment, it was easy for me to nominate Crystal as one of just five New York City students to travel to Antarctica for a 14-day expedition with Students on Ice. By embarking on this life-altering journey with her peers from countries all over the world, Crystal traveled from one end of the earth to the other in an effort to gain a new and deeper respect for the environment in which we live.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Crystal Domenech, and join with my colleagues in the House of Representatives to recognize her extraordinary work.

ON THE LIFE OF RADIO PERSONALITY EDDIE GALLAHER

HON. STENY H. HOYER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 23, 2004

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, last November Washington, DC lost one of its trademark voices. Eddie Gallaher, who entertained an entire generation of Washingtonians, passed away on November 26, 2003.

Mr. Gallaher was a radio performer who made his mark on the city during some of our century's most turbulent times. His decades-long career began in 1946 and didn't end until 3 years ago, when Mr. Gallaher was a spry 85. And though he was modest about his popularity, Mr. Gallaher was the man the biggest stars of the day always sat down to chat with when they came to visit the Nation's Capital.

Mr. Gallaher began his radio career at WTOP in Washington in 1946 as the host of the "Magical Moondial" show. In 1947, Mr. Gallaher began his "Sundial" morning program. As radio changed with the times and WTOP switched to an all-news format, Mr. Gallaher moved to WASH-FM and later on, WWDC-AM.

Mr. Speaker, in between spinning popular American standards and providing news updates and color commentary, Mr. Gallaher attracted listeners with his wit and homespun stories of life in Washington. His smooth voice was legendary as was his generous and affable nature. His reputation earned the attention of advertisers, who recruited his name for their on-air promotions.

Mr. Gallaher had a skillful knack for weaving in amusing anecdotes about the entertainment and political worlds that gave his audience a unique insider's perspective. Yet he enjoyed and valued the community feeling of the Washington area, and encouraged civic participation from his listeners. Mr. Gallaher's devotion to his fans was mirrored in his devotion to Fran Sisk, his partner for close to 50 years.

Mr. Speaker, it was a pleasure for many of us—public officials and private citizens alike—to know Mr. Gallaher. Our Nation's Capital and the radio industry has truly lost a grand, old star.

RECOGNIZING THE LANDMARK SUPREME COURT DECISION OF ROE V. WADE

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 23, 2004

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the 31st anniversary of the Supreme Court's decision in *Roe v. Wade*, a decision that recognized the fundamental right to privacy extends to a woman's decision whether or not to have an abortion with freedom from government intrusion. *Roe* transformed women's experiences in many ways: saved their lives, protected their health, fostered equality and paved the way for greater partnership with men in all aspects of our nation's life.

This anniversary is an occasion for celebration, but also one for grave concern. At a time when the majority of state legislatures, the White House, and both houses of Congress are under anti-choice control, not to mention, the U.S. Supreme Court hanging in the balance, America is at risk of losing *Roe v. Wade* and the core values of privacy and freedom embodied in it.

I believe Congress should continue the historic principles handed down in *Roe* by using our influence to plan for healthy families, prevent unintended pregnancies and protect a woman's right to choose.

Anti-choice politicians, however, are attacking the right to choose from every angle. In the past year alone, they have pushed through a significant increase in state restrictions on the right to choose, as well as the first ever criminalization of safe abortion procedures, better known as the so-called "partial birth" abortion. President Bush went even further by placing extreme anti-choice ideologues on the federal courts, took away access to contraception, stripped foreign family planning clinics of desperately needed U.S. funds, and shifted priorities away from family planning services to unproven abstinence only programs.

If these drastic measures weren't enough, I have only more bad news to share; it's very likely we'll find this year in Congress to be much of the same. just yesterday, the House Judiciary Committee began markup of the Unborn Victims of Violence Act. Proponents of this bill claim this legislation will protect unborn children from assault and murder, a mere smokescreen for the real intent of it's passage, another sneak attack on a woman's right to choose. Instead, Congress could enact serious and meaningful laws that prevent and punish violence and provide services to women and their families—which I would strongly support.

So, on this anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*, I ask my colleagues to stand up for the pro-choice majority in this country, especially those in the 13th District of California, and act immediately and powerfully to safeguard our liberty or it will be lost. The time to act is now.

AGREEING WITH THE SENTIMENT OF THE SENATE REGARDING THE DEATH OF THE HONORABLE PAUL SIMON

SPEECH OF

HON. WILLIAM O. LIPINSKI

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 21, 2004

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remember and pay tribute to the legacy of my dear friend and outstanding colleague, Senator Paul Simon. A man of great character, deep integrity, and relentless fortitude, Paul Simon graced the stage of Illinois politics for 43 years leaving an indelible mark on the face of American government and the hearts of the people of Illinois.

Beginning as a small-town newspaper editor in Troy, Illinois, Paul Simon quickly left his mark on the minds of Illinoisans with his corruption-busting headlines and head turning liberalism. In 1954, Paul Simon embarked on his legendary political journey. First as a member of the Illinois State Legislature to lieutenant governor to Member of Congress to eventual Presidential aspirant, Paul Simon became a steadfast figure in the tomes of political history.

Quietly and honestly he garnered the respect and appreciation of millions of voters and his many colleagues across the political spectrum. He efficiently championed literacy, hunger, immigration, budget reforms, missing children's programs, and higher education. Senator Simon embraced change, pioneered for reform, and challenged a system that he sought to make better.

As a Member of the House and Senate, he advocated for a balanced budget, endeavored to overhaul the federal student loan program so all young people could have a chance at college, and was instrumental in leading efforts to curb television violence and protect America's exploited children.

Genuinely concerned for the future of America and our culture, Senator Simon served as a role model for public service and the conscience of the Senate. Paul Simon challenged America to reach out to people within our nation and make sure opportunity existed here for everyone.

With his retirement from the Senate in 1996, Senator Simon founded the Public Policy Institute of Southern Illinois University to impart his knowledge and political wisdom on future generations. He believed honesty and integrity were the cornerstones of character and the makings of a great politician were based on these virtues. It is by these virtues he is remembered and honored as one of America's greatest political icons.

Mr. Speaker, Senator Simon was a man of great dignity, honor, and passion. Respected and loved by all, he is remembered fondly across all parties in all circles of government and in the hearts of millions. Senator Simon will be greatly missed and it is our duty and our honor to remember his 43 years of public service to Illinois and the integrity he brought to this nation. He will never be forgotten.

PRaising GEORGIA BERNER

HON. MELISSA A. HART

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 23, 2004

Ms. HART. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to praise a leader in the business community in my congressional district. Recently the Pittsburgh Business Times named Berner International Corporation, a leading manufacturer of air curtains and air doors, "Manufacturer of the Year" in the small manufacturing facility division.

Berner has grown from 35 to 52 employees over the past three years and has purchased new equipment which will fuel its success. Its expansion to a new 61,000 square foot facility will assist in increasing capacity.

I ask my colleagues in the House of Representatives to join me in praising Berner's president, Georgia Berner, and its employees for taking this Western Pennsylvania manufacturer to new levels of achievement. I am proud to represent an area which has produced business excellence and I look forward to further growth of Berner International in the future.

CONGRATULATIONS TO UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA AT MONROE CHEERLEADERS

HON. RODNEY ALEXANDER

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 23, 2004

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to add another group of national champions to the Louisiana legacy. The cheerleaders of the University of Louisiana at Monroe (ULM) are champs. They returned last Monday from Orlando, Florida bearing a huge trophy as the Universal Cheerleaders Association's College National Cheerleading champions in the small coed division.

This competition marked the first time ULM cheerleaders had vied for a national title, but they have been working hard since the beginning of the year. Their victory is a testament to the hard work and dedication that all the students and faculty at ULM possess, and President James Cofer should be applauded for his vision of achievement for the university. The squad beat such esteemed universities as Villanova, Pennsylvania State, Hofstra, Northern Arizona and Rider in its division.

The members of the squad came from all over the country and worked this year to come together as a whole. We applaud the coaches, Jennifer Hyde and Trey Griffin, and the members of the squad, Treva Bankston, Carley Carter, Lori Chervenak, Nick Gaspard, Samantha Jones, Alex Kain, Crystal Kelley, Rebecca LeBlanc, Nathan LeCloux, Josh Lee, Hayley Leone, Crystal Lett, Tiffany Luse, R.B. Martin, Kelly Patterson, Billie Sue Roe, Robin Samuels, Ashley Springfield, and Jamie Ventrella on a job well done. The squad will present the trophy at the January 29 basketball game at Fant-Ewing Coliseum.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in saying "Go, Tribe, Go," to the ULM cheerleading squad, national champions in the small coed division of the Universal Cheerleaders Association's College National Cheerleading competition.

RECOGNIZING THE OUTSTANDING
EFFORTS OF JAPAN IN THE RE-
CONSTRUCTION OF IRAQ AND
THE INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN
AGAINST TERRORISM**HON. HENRY J. HYDE**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 23, 2004

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express deep appreciation for the support and cooperation received by the United States from our close ally Japan. The United States and Japan have maintained a strong relationship over the past half century, successfully overcoming challenges created by the Cold War, globalization, and now the international campaign against terrorism. Our alliance has been the key to insuring stability and security in the Asia-Pacific region for decades. Today, I stand to recognize Japan's recent outstanding contributions in support of ongoing reconstruction efforts in Iraq and the international campaign against terrorism.

Last week, Japan dispatched an advance unit of the Japanese Self-Defense Forces to the Iraqi city of Samawah to assist the coalition in its efforts to stabilize and rebuild the nation of Iraq. This unit will eventually be joined by up to a thousand additional troops and support personnel. The Japanese will provide much-needed medical services, increase Iraq's water supply, rebuild schools, and repair infrastructure. Their mission will result in greater security and prosperity for the Iraqi people and welcome support for American forces in the region.

The arrival of Japanese forces in the Middle East signifies a milestone in Japan's history. For many decades, Japan has provided generous financial support for efforts to promote international security, but the country's post-war constitution has precluded the overseas deployment of Japanese Self-Defense Forces, SDF. This past summer, the Japanese Diet made an historic decision to support coalition efforts in Iraq. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, the Diet created a legal framework to allow the deployment of Japanese SDF troops to assist in reconstruction efforts. I would like to echo the words of

my good friend, Howard Baker, the U.S. Ambassador to Japan, by saying that this unprecedented decision has "enormous symbolic significance."

With this action, Japan has demonstrated recognition of the reality that oceans and geography alone cannot protect free nations from murderous fanaticism. Japan has recently experienced the pains of terrorism. I wrote to Ambassador Ryozi Kato, Japan's ambassador to the United States, to express my condolences to the families of Mr. Katsuhiko Oku and Mr. Masamori Inoue, who fell victim to a terrorist attack in Iraq on November 29. As President Abraham Lincoln noted in the Gettysburg Address, Mr. Oku and Mr. Inoue "gave their lives that that nation might live." Shortly before his death, Mr. Oku wrote a particularly meaningful entry in his diary after visiting the site of a suicide bombing in Nassiriya. He wrote: "... what we should learn from this tragedy is to have stronger determination not to yield to terrorists. Terrorists attacks could happen anywhere in the world. The elimination of terrorism is therefore a goal to be sought by all of us." These brave and determined words should strengthen our resolve to carry on with efforts to stabilize and secure post-war Iraq.

Japan's contribution to the rebuilding of Iraq includes significant financial support. After the United States, Japan is the largest donor to Iraqi reconstruction. In October, Japanese Foreign Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi announced a \$5 billion aid package for the rebuilding of Iraq, including an outright grant of \$1.5 billion for next year and loans in the amount of \$3.5 billion to be given under generous terms through 2007. Five billion dollars is a significant contribution by any measure, however, in the context of Japan's current economic challenges it is a particularly generous pledge. Japanese assistance will go toward power generation, education, water and sanitation, and infrastructure—improvements in these areas will lay the critical foundation for future Iraqi development. Last month, Prime Minister Koizumi also announced to U.S. envoy James Baker III that Japan would provide extensive debt forgiveness to Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, not only has Japan stood by the United States during Operation Iraqi Freedom, but it has also actively cooperated with

our country in combating terror around the globe. As the United States began to take steps against al-Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan, the Japanese government provided logistical support to Operation Enduring Freedom. Despite the tight controls placed on Japan's armed services by its Constitution, Japan found ways to aid the U.S.-led coalition in freeing the Afghani people from a ruthless regime and rooting out destructive Al-Qaeda cells. The Japanese Diet passed legislation allowing for the deployment of supply ships and destroyers to the Indian Ocean to act as rear military support and provide the U.S. fleet with fuel, food, and water. The Japanese also provided medical assistance to coalition troops, assisted Afghan refugees, and contributed to American intelligence-gathering. This rear support has continued through Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Japan has taken an active role in the reconstruction of Afghanistan. Tokyo hosted the international donors conference for the reconstruction of Afghanistan in January 2002. The two-day conference, co-chaired by Mrs. Sadako Ogata, the Prime Minister's special representative for Afghanistan, succeeded in gaining pledges of \$1.8 billion in assistance for 2002 as part of a total of \$4.5 billion for a 5-year period. Japan pledged a generous \$500 million to be given over a 30-month period. While many of the pledges have not been fulfilled, Japan has remained true to its word and has already disbursed most of the promised funding.

Mr. Speaker, over the past 2 years, the alliance between the United States and Japan has grown stronger as we have worked to improve our mutual security as part of the international campaign against terrorism and to address the critical issues posed by North Korean nuclear proliferation. However, our relationship is based on more than common security interests. It is a reflection of our mutual commitment to democracy and freedom. Today, I rise to thank the people of Japan for their outstanding support of the United States in the international campaign against terrorism. Japan has proven itself a good friend to the people of Iraq and Afghanistan, and a true, loyal ally of the United States.